



# Ethics and Professionalism in Law Enforcement

# Ethics

- The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation
- A set of moral principles
- A theory or system of moral values the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group
- A guiding philosophy
- A consciousness of moral importance

*John Holt*

**"The true test of character is not  
how much we know how to do,  
but how we behave when we don't  
know what to do."**

# Where Do Ethics Come From?

- Religion
- Parents
- Teachers
- Family Members
- Established Values
- Education
- Training
- Established Morals
- Sense of Good
- Cultural Beliefs
- Organizational Standards
- Community Values
- Personal Standards

## *Helen Keller*

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet.

Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

# Professionalism

- Performance
- Conduct (walking the walk)
- Behavior
- Actions and reactions
- Appearance
- Compliance with Laws and established standards

# Ethics & Professionalism

**Professionalism is the evidence of ethics.**

- Work ethic, values and expressed beliefs
- Codes of Conduct and Behavior
- Community allowances and expectations
- Department rules and procedures
- Individual and group expressed values and beliefs

## *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."



# Law Enforcement Effectiveness

**Public trust, confidence, public support & cooperation are the goal.**

**The public trust can only be gained through citizens who are confident law enforcement will not over step the safe guards to liberty/rights.**

**When law enforcement agencies/officers demonstrate they are interested in promoting public peace, order and welfare.**

# Core Values

- **Core – defined as a foundation.**
- **Value – defined as a strong worth.**

## C.S. Lewis

“Surely what a man does when he is taken off his guard is the best evidence for what sort of a man he is?

Surely what pops out before the man has time to put on a disguise is the truth?

If there are rats in a cellar you are most likely to see them if you go in very suddenly. But the suddenness does not create the rats: it only prevents them from hiding.

In the same way the suddenness of the provocation does not make me an ill-tempered man; it only shows me what an ill-tempered man I am.

The rats are always there in the cellar, but if you go in shouting and noisily they will have taken cover before you switch on the light.”

# HONOR

Compromised of integrity, loyalty and character. Traits that define who you are and what you stand for.

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power." Abraham Lincoln

# COURAGE

The mental and moral strength to  
over come obstacles, fear and  
challenges in the face of danger.

"The measure of a man's real character is what  
he would do if he knew he would never be  
found out." Thomas B. Macaulay

# COMMITMENT

Seeing a task through to its end. Making a pledge, following through with it and taking responsibility for your actions.

"When you choose your friends, don't be short-changed by choosing personality over character." W. Somerset Maugham

# PRIDE

Believing in self-worth and what you stand for, while having faith in what you represent.

It involves confidence, courage and belief.  
Pride is the end result of the application of ethical standards.

“If you lose your wealth, you have lost nothing,  
If you lose your health, you have lost something,  
But if you lose your character, you have lost everything.” Woodrow Wilson

# PROFESSIONALISM

Striving towards excellence in your job. It is demonstrating character and integrity while constantly educating yourself.

"Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are."

John Wooden



# RESPECT

A gained level of admiration. It is shown through courtesy and holding someone in high regard.

There is but one rule of conduct for a man - to do the right thing. The cost may be dear in money, in friends, in influence, in labor, in a prolonged and painful sacrifice, but the cost not to do right is far more dear: You pay in the integrity of your manhood, in your honor, in strength of character; and, for a timely gain, you barter the infinite. Archer G. Jones

# TEAMWORK

Working together to achieve a  
common goal while  
overcoming differences and  
working through the obstacles  
you may encounter.

**Two heads are better than one.**

# LEADERSHIP

An ability to lead, motivate, train and mentor.

“Leadership, is a combination of strength and character.

If you have to be without one, be without strength.”

Schwarzkopf

## Ethics is law enforcements greatest training need!

- Allegations of unethical acts are the basis for most civil suits filed against peace officers.
- Nothing is more devastating to the public trust than corruption.
- Nothing is more devastating to the supervisor's career than being directly associated with a scandal.

- **Being exposed as corrupt is the most humiliating and degrading event that could happen to officers and their families.**
- **Officers loose their jobs, career, retirement, marriage and self-respect.**
- **Two to three times as many officers who die in the line of duty each year commit suicide. Many as the result of an unethical act.**

# PEACE OFFICER IMAGE

- Maintains public support and cooperation.
- Law enforcement willingness to serve with integrity and effectiveness.
- Reputation between public and department
- Department effort.
- Individual effort.

Integrity has no need of rules.

*Albert Camus*

# CITIZEN ATTITUDE

- Officer \ Citizen relationships creates public confidence.
- Investigations of complaints & public trust.
- Stereotypes and misconceptions can harm the agency as a whole.
- Department Image. Respect must be earned.
- Public will always set a high standard.
- Public opinions.
- Dedication to public service.

# Integrity

**Integrity is not something that you should have to think about...nor consider doing...but something in the heart that is already done.**

***Doug Firebaugh***



# BIAS

- Defined as prejudice; possession that sways the mind; a diagonal line of direction; to influence; to prepossess, often unduly.

Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.

Samuel Johnson

# PREJUDICE

- Defined as an opinion; favorable or unfavorable; formed without fair examination of facts; to bias; to influence; to injure.

Integrity is not a conditional word. It doesn't blow in the wind or change with the weather. It is your inner image of yourself, and if you look in there and see a man who won't cheat, then you know he never will. John D. MacDonald

# RESENTED BEHAVIORS

- **Racial slurs and Racial Profiling**
- **Profanity**
- **Sexual innuendo**
- **Past experience**
- **Age**
- **Improper use of authority**
- **Attitude of the officer.**

# Differences of Perception

- **Remain objective always!**
- **Know local customs and ethnic groups.**
- **Know your communities cultural background.**
- **Become familiar with their different values.**
- **Know who to contact.**
- **Learn the language.**

# Law Enforcement Code of Ethics

- **Serve mankind**
- **Private life unsullied**
- **Never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions**
- **The badge of my office is a symbol of public faith**

# CANNONS OF POLICE ETHICS

## **Article 1**

**Primary responsibility of the job.**

## **Article 2**

**Limitations of authority**

# **CANNONS OF POLICE ETHICS**

## **Article 3**

**Duty to be familiar with the law and  
with responsibilities of self and  
other public officials.**

## **Article 4**

**Utilization of proper means  
to gain proper ends.**

# CANNONS OF POLICE ETHICS

## **Article 5**

**Cooperation with public officials in  
the discharge of their duties.**

## **Article 6**

**Private Conduct**



# CANNONS OF POLICE ETHICS

## **Article 7**

**Conduct toward the public.**

## **Article 8**

**Conduct of arresting and  
dealing with violators**

# **CANNONS OF POLICE ETHICS**

## **Article 9**

**Gifts and favors**

## **Article 10**

**Presentation of evidence**

## **Article 11**

**Attitude toward profession.**

# Five Ethical Principles

## ■ 1. Respect Autonomy

**It is assumed that individuals have the right to decide how to live their lives, as long as their actions do not interfere with the welfare of others. Freedom of thought and choice is encouraged.**

Integrity is not a 90 percent thing,  
not a 95 percent thing;  
either you have it or you don't.

*Peter Scotese*

# Ethical Principles

## ■ 2. Do No Harm

Unless in the line of duty and responsibility, the obligation to avoid inflicting either physical or psychological harm on others may be a primary ethical principle. And even then that harm necessary as identified within your agency policy and procedures.

# Ethical Principles

## ■ 3. Benefit Others

**There is an obligation to improve and enhance the welfare of others, even where such enhancements may inconvenience or limit the freedom of the person offering the assistance.**

**"Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom." Thomas Jefferson**

# Ethical Principles

## ■ 4. Be Just

**To be just in dealing with others assumes equal treatment of all, in general, to observe the golden rule.**

**"Each time you are honest and conduct yourself with honesty, a success force will drive you toward greater success. Each time you lie, even with a little white lie, there are strong forces pushing you toward failure."** -

*Joseph Sugarman*

# Ethical Principles

## ■ 5. Be faithful

One should keep promises, tell the truth, be loyal and maintain respect and civility. only in so far as we sustain faithfulness can we expect to be seen as truly trustworthy.

The difference between 'involvement' and 'commitment' is like an eggs-and-ham breakfast: the chicken was 'involved' - the pig was 'committed'.



# Ethical Dilemmas

- “Never give in! Never give in! Never, never, never.
- Never -- in anything great or small, large or petty -- never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.”

*Sir Winston Churchill*

# Discretion

- Discretion can be defined as the power to make a choice.

"It is better to deserve honors and not have them than to have them and not deserve them."

Mark Twain

# Discretion Dilemma

## **Officer Wrongdoing:**

Working a side job at a local nightclub, an officer observes a disturbance on the far side of the bar. Responding to the problem, the officer discovers that the instigator is an extremely intoxicated off-duty officer who refuses to follow instructions. The other party involved claims that the officer assaulted him. The complainant does not know his assailant is a peace officer.

Some discretionary dilemmas arise because of a personal or professional relationship between the officer and the subject. Typically, these types of dilemmas involve stopping a speeding car and finding that the driver is a fellow officer or responding to an altercation involving another officer or family member who is probably at fault.

# Duty

Duty involves two main types of dilemma. The first raises questions about a peace officer's obligation in a certain situation.

Likewise, some peace officers believe they have certain responsibilities; others do not feel bound by such an obligation. This type of discussion inevitably brings out differences of opinion fundamental to how officers see their role. It is also an ethical issue.

The other type of duty-related dilemma is much more straightforward. The officer knows that the job requires a certain action but considers the action either inconvenient or a waste of time, which makes the officer reluctant to perform it.

# Duty Dilemma

## **Copping Out:**

**It is 10:30 p.m., and an officer is preparing to end his shift.**

**The officer observes an incident (non-violent) between two inmates that requires intervention and a lengthy report.**

**Does the officer provide assistance or look the other way so he can get off on time?**

# Honesty

Under the general heading of honesty, officers face dilemmas involving self-enrichment, personal misdeeds, and various issues relating to arrest situations.

Bribery, a form of dishonesty, also can be an issue under this category of dilemma. Many officers do not view the temptation to accept bribery as a dilemma because they seldom confront such opportunities. Or, perhaps the occupational subculture in law enforcement departments is such that officers clearly see taking a bribe as a serious violation; therefore, there is no question about the proper response when faced with the opportunity.

# Honesty Dilemma

## **Personal Misdeeds:**

**While driving a departmental vehicle, an officer strikes a fixed object.**

**With no witnesses present and wishing to avoid disciplinary action, the officer considers claiming that another car collided with the vehicle and then fled the scene.**

# Loyalty

In situations involving loyalty, officers must decide what to do when faced with wrongdoings by other officers. Officers' dilemmas in this area range from witnessing relatively minor wrongdoings, e.g., misuses of overtime, to very serious breaches of public trust, e.g., physical abuse of an inmate or the commission of a crime.

What should officers do when they witness their partners use excessive force to subdue a inmate?

Even though they may not condone the action, do they remain loyal to their partners or do they blow the whistle on them?

Another set of loyalty issues involves observing, or suspecting, that another officer has committed a crime.



# Loyalty Dilemma

## **Cover Me:**

Because covering up for another officer has become more risky with the possibility of individual civil liability, fewer officers may be willing to do so.

This justification, however, differs from an ethical argument to come forward in the name of integrity.

In addition, a clear distinction exists between reporting fellow officers out of an ethical responsibility and coming forward in an official investigation in order to avoid being disciplined.

# Gratuities & Gifts

**It is hard to ignore the subject of gratuities in any class on peace officer ethics.**

**Many articles appearing in law enforcement publications and academic journals discuss the topic, and civilians often identify it as an enduring problem among peace officers.**

**Still, many officers believe there is nothing wrong with accepting gratuities.**

**One distinction that can be made in these dilemmas is between:**

**True gratuities, something given to any officer as a matter of policy, and**

**Gifts, something given to an individual in return for a specific action.**

**However, both gratuities and gifts can become problematic issues for officers and agencies.**

# Gratuities & Gifts Dilemmas

## **Declining a Gratuity:**

To avoid any suggestion of impropriety, you prefer to pay for drinks and meals at area establishments. You have learned from experience that people always expect something in return.

You stop by a convenience store for a soda. The clerk refuses to accept payment. You explain that you would prefer to pay.

The clerk, now upset, accuses you of trying to be better than the other officers. He threatens to tell your supervisor, who also stops by occasionally. What do you do?

**The circumstances amid which you live  
determine your reputation; the truth you  
believe determines your character.**

**Reputation is what you are supposed to be;  
character is what you are.**

**Reputation is the photograph; character is  
the face.**

**Reputation comes over one from without;  
character grows up from within.**

**Reputation is what you have when you come to a new community; character is what you have when you go away.**

**Your reputation is learned in an hour; your character does not come to light for a year.**

**Reputation is made in a moment; character is built in a lifetime.**

**Reputation grows like a mushroom; character grows like the oak.**

**A single newspaper report gives you your reputation; a life of toil gives you your character.**

**Reputation makes you rich or makes you poor; character makes you happy or makes you miserable.**

**Reputation is what men say about you on your tombstone; character is what angels say about you.**

# Ethics Checklist

- ✓ **Is it Legal?**
- ✓ **Is it Balanced? (Is it fair to all concerned?)**
- ✓ **How will it make me feel about myself? (Will I be proud of my decision?)**



# Ethics

- **Doing the right thing even when no one is watching you**